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**Religion and Politics:
The Human Society between
the Power of God and
the Power of Man**

The Seventeenth Ecumenical Theological Symposium

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Human Identity and Dignity: The Fight Between Theology and Madness

Preliminary remarks

The identity and dignity of man as crown of God's creation represent a constant theme in Christian theology throughout the centuries. However, as human society has become more secularized and many new academic fields have appeared in the mosaic of the study of man, all kinds of approaches have been formulated, many of them conflicting with one another, many reductionist in nature, and yet others relativizing everything as western society becomes more and more permissive. This situation made it necessary for Christian theology to reaffirm its stance, not by rejecting or ignoring the other approaches, but by engaging them in fruitful conversation.[1]

The general framework in which the topic of human identity and dignity must be approached, discussed and analyzed is offered by the field of theological anthropology, where the concept of *imago Dei* is essential in understanding man's identity and dignity as divine gifts. In this context *imago Dei* is taken as a point of reference to either start a set of reflections, to conclude it or to have it as a permanent basis of analysis and interpretation.

This essay intends to explain that human identity and dignity spring from man's creation in the image of God and that they are maintained in purity and integrity inasmuch as man

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1. Theodor Damian, "A Dignifying Understanding of Man," in *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies,* vol. XXI, Nr, 1-2, 2009, p. 221.

stands rightly before God. As man is a theandric event, his or her positioning before God will have to have a Christocentric character and will have to happen in the Church.

The assault on human identity and dignity

As Christoph Schwoebel writes, the idea of human identity and dignity as divine gifts has been lost in the decontextualizing philosophies of man in modern times where, in theory, human dignity is affirmed as a universal principle, yet in practice it is not respected. Hence, the need to recontextualize it, which means to place it in the field of Christian anthropology where it belongs.[2] He writes:

> While most modern anthropologies locate what it means to be human in the relationship of humans to themselves (i.e. the capacity for reflection, self-consciousness) or in their relationship to the world, (i.e. compensation for instinctual deficiencies by means of language and culture, and so on), Christian theological anthropology locates it in God's relationship to humans. This is also the context where the concept of human dignity is to be located. Theologically, human dignity is a distinction which humans possess apart from and independent of any capacities or qualities they possess in their relationship to themselves or to the world, so that it must be acknowledged as a given which is not constituted by these acts of acknowledgement.[3]

Kant's assumption that man is an autonomous being anticipated the decontextualizing and deconstructivist views on

2. Christoph Schwoebel, "Recovering Human Dignity," in *God and Human Dignity,* Edited by R. Kendall Soulen and Linda Woodhead, William B. Eerdmans Publishers, Gd. Rapids, MI/ Cambridge, UK, 2006, pp. 45-47.
3. *Ibidem,* p. 49.

who we are and led to definitions of man, to ways to self-understanding that generated numerous crises that are marking our world and civilization, such as alienation, absurdity, individualism, futility, doubt, attitude towards death and many others.

Referring to the way in which we live today the philosopher Emil Cioran, in his famous book *The Fall into Time,* decries the fact that our civilization is immersed in speed instead of being immersed in contemplation, wonder and devotion. The progress of our civilization, according to Cioran, is a modern version of the original fall. We fall irrevocably by dilapidating our resources of any kind. If we look prophetically into the future, considering the way we go towards it, we can only anticipate our inconsolable panic in the face of a sealed horizon.[4]

Cioran's pessimistic views on the human situation come from his belief that we are at war with ourselves and that every problem we generate is an assault on human identity and dignity, hence the need to have this situation detected, conscientized and adressed, just as when we find ourselves in a foreign place and the cultivation of our original belonging and identity becomes a priority, as Mihaela Albu writes.[5]

Imago Dei

According to John Polkinghorne the concept of human dignity has to be liberated from the reductionist and distorted understandings of it. This is how man's identity and dignity will recover their integrity and meaning.[6] But from a Christian

4. Emil Cioran, *The Fall into Time,* transl. from French by R. Howard, Quadrangle books, Chicago 1970, pp.47;67.

5. Mihaela Albu, *Cultura si Identitate [Culture and Identity],* Universitaria Press, Craiova, 2008, p. 18.

6. John Polkinghorne, "Anthropology in an Evolutionary Context," in *God and Human Dignity...,* p. 90.

perspective the only one who liberates is Christ. That is why a return to Christ's teaching and to the Bible is necessary.

The entire Bible is about God and man and consequently the existence of man is there presented as a theocentric event. Human beings are characterized by an inherent neediness and vulnerability that determine a certain position they have to take as they stand *coram Deo.*

Being created in God's image and standing before God, as man is always a being in need - but even without that, through the image alone - man is bestowed with glory and honor which are royal attributes and from which worth and dignity spring.

It is because of the image of God in us that we have an inner propensity towards the holy. We admire the extraordinary and we want to be extraordinary. Indeed, as image of God we are by nature extraordinary. We only fall in different ways into the ordinary and that is why the extraordinary remains for us a permanent point of reference, an ideal. In other words, as R. Kendall Soulen writes, the human self is grounded in a transcendent reality:

> The moral worth or dignity of a human being was by no means equated with his or her health or bodily excellence. Rather, human dignity was secured by a source that transcended bodily goods alone, and was therefore shielded from the indignities of sickness, disease, and, ultimately, death. [7]

That is why man's ideal is always related to the transcendent as he or she is in constant pilgrimage form real to ideal, form immanent to transcendent. The target of the pilgrimage is the home of being. It is because man belongs (and not to himself) that his entire destiny is marked by this metaphysical thirst.

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7. R. Kendall Soulen, "Cruising toward Bethlehem," in *God and Human Dignity...,* p. 105.

The Protestant theologian Gerhard Ebeling confirms that our existence and being is God's image, when he says that the image of God is not human property, but the word of institution spoken by God upon the human being. Because we don't own it, the *imago Dei* theology requires that we take "with utmost seriousness the existence of the sacred reality of God,"[8] all the more since God is an apophatic reality. Yet, based on this, and being created in the image of God, there is an apophatic dimension in man's existence and being as well, which gives an even higher status to his or her identity and dignity. Hence the need for an apophatic anthropology which renders justice to and offers the right framework for an adequate understanding of who we are as humans.

It is important to conscientize our identity because realizing who we are leads to what we do with who we are. According to Linda Woodhead, human identity and dignity is not only something to be assessed but also something to be worked for as well. This kind of work, which is related to our participation in God leads to deification:

> Human beings are made in the image of God, as well as having to grow into that image. That does not mean that they are created already possessing some divine spark that is already whole and entire and has only to free itself from whatever holds it down in order to float free and be reunited with its divine source - as if a fragment of divinity were trapped in a human body (a view more common among some Platonists). It means that human beings are created possessing the capacity to be deified - a capacity that some of the Fathers identified with freedom to cooperate with God's will. This capacity belongs to the whole person, body and soul, and it is the whole person who is also to be deified - in this life as well as the next.[9]

8. John Polkinghorne, *op. cit.,* p. 92.

9. Linda Woodhead, "Apophatic Anthropology," in *God and Human Dignity...,* p. 237.

This idea is consonant with Gregory of Nyssa's teaching that image is a divine gift in us, but at the same time it is to be achieved, that is, to work on it, to bring it to the initial splendor. That is somehow similar to the theology of the tension between the image and the likeness of God, according to which image (reason, will, feelings) is what was given to us and likeness (holiness and immortality) is a gift to be achieved, to arrive at through human effort and divine grace. This ideal is realizable only through Christ because it is the theandric person of Christ who represents the restored image of God in man and who through this restoration opens the way to its fulfillment or deification.

The reaching of the highest human potential is Christocentric because it is Christ who came to show and teach how this is to be done by adopting for us the right position before God.

Man's position Coram Deo *in* Ecclesia Christi

When you believe in God you are placing yourself in front of the The Other, you enter a transcending relationship and consequently you are challenged by it in multiple ways. As Emmanuel Levinas put it, "The Other has a face and the face of The Other is the foundation of Ethics and the origin of human society."[10]

Ethics is about doing and about attitudes. Doing depends on circumstances, context and purpose. When one is in front of God, one's circumstances, context and purpose are defined. When one does things under God's eyes, one does them differently: with fear on the one hand, but with the conscience that he is loved by God and that God can intervene at any time to give strength and help, on the other hand. If we go by Karl Barth's exhortation: "Let

10. see Walter Earl Fluker, "Transformed Nonconformity: Spirituality, Ethics and Leadership in the Life and Work of Martin Luther King Jr." in *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin,* vol. XXV, Nr. 1, 2004, p. 29.

God be God," we accept that God is the Lord, a Lord who loves what He has created and who comes to us in many ways through direct and indirect interventions in our history and lives.

Thus man's position *coram Deo* becomes a driving force in our attempt to define and reach human worth and dignity.

Yet since man's nature is relational and destined to be profoundly linked to the others around him, based on Christian theology, it is in the ecclesial community that human beings have the possibility to become iconic beings by working together to make God's image shine since that image, even through the fall, was never destroyed, but only darkened. Mircea Eliade defines man as *homo religiosus.* This is a total man, a person of communion who never lives alone because in him or her an entire world is present.[11]

As Robert Jenson rightly observes, the relation between person and community needs to be developed in the Church and placed in the context of Trinitarian theology. The Church, he writes, is the place where mutual embodiment occurs through the body of Christ offered for communion:

> Thus the body of Christ is at once the loaf and cup available to me, and a body which is communally my body. In the church, I can always find my body and know certainly that it is mine, by taking the bread and cup with the other members of the body. And I can always find your body and know certainly that it is yours, by the same act. When we gather around the loaf and cup, we are available to each other despite all attempts to hide and without possibility of error. Otherwise stated, the drama of the Eucharist cannot fall apart for lack of mutual availability, and participants in that drama cannot lose one another.[12]

11. Mircea Itu, *Mircea Eliade,* "Romania de Maine" Foundation Press, Bucharest, 2006, p. 101.

12. Robert W. Jenson, "Anima Ecclesiastica," in *God and Human Dignity...* pp. 66-67.

John Zizioulas also believes that personhood is an ecstatic act of communion and the participation in the ecclesial personhood does not consist in what we can or cannot do, but in what God does for us. If human identity is a divine gift, that indicates why the divine agency and not the human agency is the source of human dignity.[13]

Thus the ecclesiological dimension of man's identity and dignity, since man is a being in communion, indicates the eschatological character of these two fundamentally important features; in other words, what starts here and what is done here in the struggling Church about them, is continued in the triumphant Church in the Kingdom of God. And because the God whose image we bear is a Trinitarian God, it is the doctrine of the Trinity that offers the most secure framework for a solid understanding of what human identity and dignity are.

Conclusion

To go away from God is to damage God's image in us; that will make us degenerate to the zoological order as E. Cioran , A. Heschel and N. Berdiaev would say; to abandon the *imago Dei* would mean to take on the *imago bestiae,* the image of the beast, of the delicate monster, to use the metaphor of French poet Ch. Baudelaire.

In many respects man has descended to the zoological order since many sociologists, theologians, philosophers believe that we live in a dog-eat-dog society or *homo homini lupus* (man is wolf to man). The great question of our time is, consequently, how to change this way of being and society into a *homo homini Deus* world (man is god to man), or how to change the anthropocentric understanding of ourselves in which, according to Protagoras of Abdera, man is the measure of all things, into a theocentric understanding where God is the measure of all things.

13. Hans S. Reinders, "Human Dignity in the Absence of Agency," in *God and Human Dignity...,* p. 135.

This is our dilemma and task at the same time. It is because of this degradation that A. Heschel draws our attention on what he calls "the terrifying seriousness of human situation,"[14] and that Karl Barth could say, in frightening words, that "human beings, the way we know them, are impossible; these humans, in the presence of God cannot but die."[15]

That is why, if in our society we are confronted with all kinds of crises and problems and we find ourselves in all kinds of captivities, we need another model that liberates and unites and there is no better paradigm for this than the Holy Trinity.

If we are confronted with the aggression of a world of the *homo homini lupus* type, we need another model that can offer balance and bring empowerment, and there is no higher model for that than the Holy Trinity.

If we are affected by the disintegration of the human community due to alienation, self-sufficiency and individualism, we need the presence and the healing work of God, we need a model that will help us conscientize our own gifts, spiritual richness, and inner beauty so that we can use them as remedies and restoration tools, and for such a need there is not a more efficient model than that of the Holy Trinity.

If one looks at how the world is today and where it is heading to and realizes the tragic perspective of the humankind, but also the salvation that is at hand according to the Christian teaching, one can understand why Paul Florenski could say that ultimately there will be no other choice for humanity but the Trinity of madness.[16]

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14. Abraham J. Heschel, *Who Is Man?,* Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA 1965, p. 13.

15. Karl Barth, *The Word of God and the Word of Man,* Harper, New York, 1957, p. 140.

16. Theodor Damian, *Theological and Spiritual Dimensions of Icons According to St. Theodor of Studion,* the Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter, 2002, p. 14.

John A. McGuckin

JOHN A. MCGUCKIN

Orthodoxy and Culture

The Orthodox church has a long history, and a memory even longer than its history, for it wove the fabric of the ancient scriptures into its own robe of experience, thereby enriching its psychic perception with a prophetic acuity that was steeped in deepest antiquity, yet ever looking to a radiant future of the age-to-come that stands in judgement on present conditions. It has come through the fires of political opposition, often bloody and totalitarian, as well as times of establishment support. The bane of the one, through many tears, often became a blessing for it. The blessing of the other, even in much apparent self-congratulation, often proved its bane. Over many centuries it has seen the profound courage and faithfulness of men and women in relation to the defence of the faith (their names are recorded in thick and heavy Synaxaria), as well as observing an all too human weakness and unreliability in times of stress and crisis (though it has generally passed over the names of the lapsed and the apostates in a charitable silence, recording only the martyrs). It has learned from the Lord himself that there is an evil force abroad in the world[1], a spirit that can even pass as an 'angel of light'[2] and which will offer, to those susceptible, the kingdoms of the world if only for the price of falling down and worshipping it [3]. It has received as a warning from the same Lord the intelligence that the world

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1. Jn 12.31; Jn 14.30.
2. 2 Cor. 11.14.
3. Mt. 4. 8-10.

will never love it, just as it has never really loved the King of Glory.[4] Indeed it has been told that the world will always tend to hate it[5], precisely because of its constitutional spiritual oppositional stance to the *Kosmos* [6], its character of always being 'unknown' and unmanageable to the powers that attempt to rule the world's affairs.[7]

The Apostle has also confirmed for it that the Church has to maintain, as a primary duty, this sense of careful distancing from the world. It must always be on its guard that the world does not form its mentality (the élan of its imagination, its ethos, its *nous* or *phronema* [8]) but that on the contrary it struggles to conform the world always to its fundamental charter and inspiration, the Gospel that will save it. This is the burden of the apostle's own warning to the Church: 'Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.' [9] The Church has seen the rise and fall of empires and ideologies as vast and antique as those of Persia and Rome, as all-embracing as those of Lenin and Mao. It has witnessed the vigorous flourishing of heresies that once seemed so trend-setting, so elegant, and persuasive, but are now no more than foolish whispers in the dust. It has lived and experienced the perennial grace of the Spirit so long now as no longer to be excited and led

4. Jn. 15:18 'If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.'

5. Jn. 15:19. ' If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.' Also see Jn. 16.33.

6. Jn.16:20 Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice.

7. Jn. 17:14. ' I have given them thy word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.' Again: Jn 14:17: 'Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you.'

8. 1 Cor. 2.16; Phil. 2.5.

9. Rom. 12.2; also see: Rom. 8.6-7.

away by the promises afforded by theories of 'theological enculturation' or 'acculturation'. It has sufficient wisdom to ask: What culture? Whose theology? and ever seeks to discern the spirit and rationale behind what is fundamentally a term of description for the way the Church exists within the world until the time of the Kingdom.

Equally foreign to the Orthodox Church, then, are the concepts that the Church must abhor and turn away from human culture; or that the Church must seek to embrace it. Both positions have been sustained in recent times, and in past times, but not by the Orthodox Church. The first shamefully neglects the missionary imperative of the Church of Christ in the world [10], and the obvious corollaries, first that the Church's members are necessarily in dialogue with the culture with which they seek to share the good news; and secondly, that the world as the created order (*Ktisis*) established by God is good and holy and beautiful, and not always, in an indiscriminate way, to be identified with the *Kosmos* spoken of in the Gospel of John, that spirit of rebellion that exists within the beautiful world-order of the Pantokrator. This simple and foolish mistake in theology is often to be found behind certain sectarian attitudes within Orthodoxy, noticeable since the collapse of Byzantium, that call for the abhorring of the 'world' by the 'church', applying both mysterious and sacred terms in a monochromatic and unreflective way.

The Church's true position in regard to human culture, with the latter being understood as a complex extension of the human person in society,[11] is exactly what its position is towards the human person itself: that all stands under the light of God's glory: a light that is joy for the righteous elect, and yet judgement over all wickedness. Human culture in Orthodox thought, therefore, is

10. Mt. 28. 19-20

11. Human culture as the refined extension of human effort and aspiration: 'culture building' as that which rises beyond subsistence existence, into a concern for art, literature, complex human and material constructs for the building of human agencies; all the varied enterprises and activities that go to make the record of civilization.

not a univocal concept. But if the Church cannot endorse any aspect of culture unambiguously (not even its own ecclesiastical sub-culture, or any periods of so-called establishment 'Golden Age', be it that of a Justinian or a Romanov), then neither is it positioned in such a way that the entirety of human culture is so compromised that the Church must separate itself out, stand apart from it, seek to dominate it. Culture is part of the God-given call of human beings to serve as priests of the cosmos, as the Byzantine fathers expressed it; priests whose spiritual task is to assist in the transfiguration of the world into a sacrament of divine glory. It is part of human race's innate gift from God, therefore, to wish in the deepest aspirations of its being to make of the world a better place, more elegant and wondrous, than the one they found. This theo-drama is written into the charter of humanity's making. This is partly why the term for Spirit (*Ruah*) in the Old Testament is so often associated with the artistic skillfulness of the craftsmen who fashion the vessels for the sacred worship of the Israelites[12], or with the wisdom and intelligent rhetoric of the teachers of the Law in the Wisdom literature. Wisdom and craft are proposed as inherently holy things. These are precisely the things, intelligence and craft, that comprise most human definitions of culture and civilization. To pretend that the Church can stand apart from them, or should be innately hostile to them, is as misguided an exercise as arguing that it stands apart from world history in so far as it is eschatological, or is itself excused all moral and spiritual criticism in so far as it is the immaculate Bride of the Lamb. This gift of the Spirit and this Icon of the Christ as woven into the soul of the race, is also why the Orthodox church finds the theological sub-text (it is, sadly, more than a theologoumenon now) of humanity and human culture as a *massa damnata* to be a shocking thing, seriously misguided, if not downright sacrilegious. What this theme signified in the Blessed Augustine was certainly not the role it has come to play in his later commentators.

12. Ex.35.31; Num.24.2; Deut.34.9; Sirach. 39.6-7;

The Church, therefore, occupies a tentative space, as the writer of the ancient *Letter to Diognetus* said, in the world but not of it, yet occupying a place in the world as the very soul of the world's finest aspirations, and thus, certainly, in a way in which "not of it" never means "apart from it". Even those ascetic zealot Christians who fled the cities to inhabit the deserts, knew that this fundamental duty of being church in the world had priority over their (equally valid) search for solitude; and this is why the monks have always recognized the duties of hospitality, missionary witness, and spiritual guidance, as fundamentally related even to the ministries of the most dedicated solitaries.

Orthodoxy occupies a more complex and ambiguous position in relation to the notion of 'a theology of culture' than can be seen in the writings of several different types of contemporary theologians (mainly 'first-world' Western Protestant) who demonstrate a certain fault-line in the western Christian experience between those who affirm the significance of theological enculturation [13], and those who seem decisively to equate human culture with what the Lord spoke of in the Gospel as 'the Kosmos' which is hostile to the Spirit. Neither position seems to the Orthodox to be correct.

In its own journey through human history and culture, Orthodoxy has refined central aspects of human culture in decisive ways that in turn have shaped and altered the face of civilization. It has made, on its journey, monuments of enduring culture that speak to the world of the power and spirit of the Christian imagination and passion. From the simple rock cut cells of the Cappadocian or Coptic monks, so redolent of simplicity and modesty, to the cathedrals of Constantinople or Moscow, so filled with dignity and elevation of soul, it is unarguable that Orthodoxy has a certain culture and ethos that marks it. It is distinctly *sui generis* from that which characterises the Protestant or Catholic worlds. This is not to say that it has a monopoly on Christian

13. We may assert Paul Tillich as a case in point. Niebuhr is also an important aspect of this. Barth at first stood against the trend, though some have seen his late treatise *The Humanity of God*, as a signalled change of direction.

culture, of course, but its cultural presence has been immense, and immensely formative. All the architectural proto-structure of the church's historical presence, its polity and praxis, was formed and shaped in the Orthodox East[14]: one need only mention briefly in support of this the fact that the Church's Gospels are Greek, its Creeds are Greek, its liturgy is Syro-Greek; its major spiritual writings are Greek, its foundational music and hymnography is Greek, the form of its Rhetoric is Greek. It was the Orthodox East which took the extensive culture of Roman Law, and Roman Empire (often at variance with one another in the uneasily juxtaposed aspirations of equity and dominance) and attempted to refashion them both: now with Law understood as a spirit of Justice, and with Empire reinvented as a system of God-founded stability and human concord. Whether or not it extensively succeeded in that task of 'Christianizing Hellenism' (a task and *telos* that remains at the heart of the Orthodox attitude to culture) it is the case that in its Byzantine ascendancy the Church certainly brought to the Roman Law which undergirded all ancient societal values, the re-pristinating charter of the Gospel; and decidedly brought to the Hellenistic concept of sacral and absolute Kingship, the biblical notion of the monarch as God's anointed servant, whose right to rule depended on his sustenance of covenant values for God's poor.

These are lofty matters that have not yet attracted the critical attention and study that they deserve. The refashioning of the ancient world's soul and values through the Byzantine synthesis has all too often been dismissed by scholars; either ignored, or caricatured on the basis of minimal contact with the primary texts. Fortunately the study of the real political, theological, and societal genius of Byzantine multi-culturalism has in recent decades begun in earnest. Even in the Eastern Christian world the sources for such a study were not readily available (with the exception of Russia before the 20th century) because of

14. Rome itself, we may recall, that vastly formative capital, before the 4th century was also fundamentally a Greek church, extensively worshipping in Greek until the time of Damasus.

the socio-economic hardships concomitant with the fall of Byzantine civilization, and the loss of two progressive forces in the historical process of Orthodox cultural refashioning, firstly the patronage of the Emperor and that of an extensive class of aristocracy, and secondly the existence of higher centres of learning and the arts as sponsored and sustained as part of the central forms of self-expression of the Orthodox imperial state. Other centuries, many of them dreary and oppressive, have taken away the cultural artifacts enduring from another age of the Orthodox church, and have placed a somnolent veil over much of contemporary Orthodoxy's imagination as it is concerned with socio-political involvement, or even in regard to the Church's engagement in the central processes of healing, educational, artistic and cultural institutions; many of which (take healing and higher education as examples) are now regarded as purely the concern of a secularized state, and no longer a 'proper domain' of the church. New vistas emerging from the realignment of Eastern Europe after the demise (dare we hope?) of totalitarian politics, have already dawned, and will continue to stimulate world Orthodoxy to 'think again'.

In this light it is of crucial importance, in the interim era, as it were, to avoid the easy temptation to allow the church's imagination as to how to relate its mission to the condition of the world's present culture to be conditioned by immediately preceding models. It is, for example, the time to celebrate the saintliness of the Romanovs who faced the mystery of their deaths with such Christian gentleness, but it is not the time to advance Nicholas II as a model for how the Church should negotiate politics. What is at stake is not the recreation of old models, but the witnessing of the same spirit that was bold enough to see the demands of the Gospel and wise enough to recognize how they could be used as a leaven in the dough of contemporary culture. This prophetic insight was what energized the ancient church, the church of the fathers, and the church of the medieval byzantines. It is this spirit that must again be brought forward in the contemporary Orthodox church, the heir of all these ages, but an

heir that is not enslaved to those cultural answers they gave in their own times. In proving it has both prophetic insight and wisdom in applying the Gospel, the Orthodox church in the present century will prove that it is truly, and effectively, Christ's church alive in the world as its sacrament of healing. Taking the step to think through, deeply and collegially, in all the parts of the Orthodox world, how the ancient Christian traditions of wisdom can be orchestrated to effect, transform and redeem contemporary human culture is an absolutely pressing *prolegomenon* to action that falls to this generation.

In an enduringly significant part of his *opus* Archpriest Georges Florovsky was once asked to deal with this issue of Faith and Culture. It is an essay that first appeared in St. *Vladimir's Quarterly* and is now accessible also in his *Collected Works.* [15] Florovsky recognized, in the mid fifties of the 20th century, that a great crisis of culture was upon them, and he defined it in terms of a crisis of faith: 'The major tension is not so much', he said, 'between belief and unbelief, as precisely between rival beliefs. Too many 'strange Gospels'[16] are preached, and each of them claims total obedience.' Florovsky did not think that the Church's answer to the problem of culture, was to argue for greater spirituality, or for more religion, in a renewed society. He states clearly that it would be disastrous in his view if society, turning away from secular disbelief should come to a position where: 'It rallied around a false banner and pledged allegiance to a wrong faith.'[17] He puts his finger on it, unerringly from an Orthodox perspective, when he makes his final diagnosis of the crisis of contemporary culture: 'The real root of the modern tragedy does not lie only in the fact that people lost convictions, but that they deserted Christ.'

15. 'Faith and Culture', St. Vladimir's Quarterly. vol.4. nos. 1-2. 1955, pp. 29-44; repr. in: *Christianity and Culture.* Collected works, vol.2. Nordland. Belmont. Mass. 1974. pp. 9-30.
16. Gal. 1. 6-9.
17. 'Faith and Culture'. p. 11.

His analysis of the problem of Faith and Culture attempts several definitions of what culture might mean, not all of them leading to a single common answer. But he marks out human culture essentially as that which separates civilization from primitivism:

When we speak of a crisis of culture what do we actually mean? The word culture is used in various senses, and there is no commonly accepted definition. On the one hand culture is a specific attitude or orientation of individuals, and of human groups, by which we distinguish the civilized society from the primitive. It is at once a system of aims and concerns, and a system of habits. On the other hand culture is a system of values, produced and accumulated in the creative process of history, and tending to obtain a semi-independent existence (that is, independent of that creative endeavour which originated or discovered these values) …. Thus, when we speak of the crisis of culture we usually imply a disintegration in one of these two different, if related, systems, or rather in both of them. [18]

What seems to be the operative model here is a set of communal spiritual values that are so enshrined in a human social collective, that almost as a natural law of growth, the values seek to embody themselves, or incarnate their spiritual ethos, in a set of habits, customs, institutions. The institutions (take for example the way in which a society's religious ideals will reflect themselves - inevitably so- in the Law) may at some stage dissociate themselves from the élan of the spirit that first gave rise to them. So, for example, pagan Roman Law which began as part of the system of the priestly veneration of the old gods, was radically secularized by the time of the Principate, and reworked by the Christian empire as a new form of secular *pro-paideusis*. This time round, Byzantium's sense of the 'secularity' of civil law was applied as a way of ensuring the adherence of large imperial populations to a form of ethical and equitable behaviour that was consciously parallel to the legal system of the Church Canons.

18. 'Faith and Culture'. pp. 11-12.

Byzantine Christian theorists made the Christian civil law come onto a course parallel to the canons, but not subject to them, for the latter only were the proper domain of the bishops [19] whereas communal legal rights were the domain of lay magistrates. The subtle and fluid movement of law within a society (law which changes so slowly and led by its own conservative priesthood as much as by societal pressures) can bear witness to the way the spiritual ethos of different ages has passed under the shadow of the Gospel, or has passed out of the shadow of the Gospel. The long arduous struggle the church had, for example, legally to protect the life of the unborn, has been unravelled by many contemporary societies today which have pushed the frontier back to pagan times: applying new technological facilities to effect abortion as (apparently) a preferential contraceptive method; the figures here no longer supporting the argument that it was a measure of last resort. Here is a case in hand of how a cultural institution (the law on this or that aspect of behaviour) rises out of a 'spirit abroad'. It is an example how an ethos, or set of values, can be incarnated in specific instances (culture is nothing and means nothing if it is not constantly grounded in a local human environment), can lose the élan that once embodied itself in a societal structure, and may often fail before the pressures of other movements.

In this sense the Church's attitude to culture seems to be a critical one: a matter of assessing how much the structures of a given society work, or fail to work, incardinating within its core the values that the Church collectively celebrates in its mystical, liturgical, and moral life. It will know, from the outset, that the structures of the wider society, will not be ones that will be easily surrendered to those it would itself prefer and wish to embody in its own domain (the Church considered mystically as the society of God's elect in the world). This gives us to understand immediately that the Church's own culture must always be far ahead of that of society as a whole. Its 'churchly' culture (since the

19. Who were also given a distinct legal status in the Christian empire, but not legal authority over the 'secular' domain of Christian laity's affairs.

words ecclesiastical and churchy have been too debased to have any utility any longer) is meant to be no less than paradisial, the eschatological hope for all that the world looks for in its healing. This is why, essentially speaking, the ultimate 'culture of the Church' is love and mercy and reconciliation: the quintessential marks of the presence of its Lord among it. When these charisms flourish all will be well. But the Church has to resist the temptation to play at being an alternative culture, inhabited by the pious, a culture which is 'cute, or 'exotic (good for tourist value), but not one that can be taken seriously by the intelligentsia, who are the critical factor in times of reorientating cultural institutions and elaborating principles of cultural ethos. The Church, if it is serious in leading the movement to a renewal of culture, must require of all its leaders (it is already the case in relation to all of its significant theologians) the minimum 'normally applicable' requirement in the present era of a doctorate in a higher institution of learning. It has already laid down stringent requirements ethically and ascetically for its leaders. Now it has to repristinate the episcopate by henceforward only admitting to its ranks monastics of the highest intellectual capacity, allied with the deep spirituality we customarily expect.

Florovsky's essay on Faith and Culture raises many concerns of enduring significance. He had read his Barth, and knew him closely. His essay resonates with some of the style of the Swiss theologian, especially when Fr. George warns the reader that culture in decline can collapse into mere civilization. His own sense seems to resonate empathetically with that cautious reserve:

> Culture is not an unconditional good. Rather it is a sphere of unavoidable ambiguity and involvement. It tends to degenerate into civilization.... Culture is human achievement, is man's own deliberate creation, but an accomplished civilization is so often inimical to human creativity. ...In civilization man is, as it were, detached from the very roots of his existence, from his very self, or from nature, or from God. This alienation of man can be described and defined in a number of ways ... but in all

cases culture would appear not only to be in predicament, but to be predicament itself.' [20]

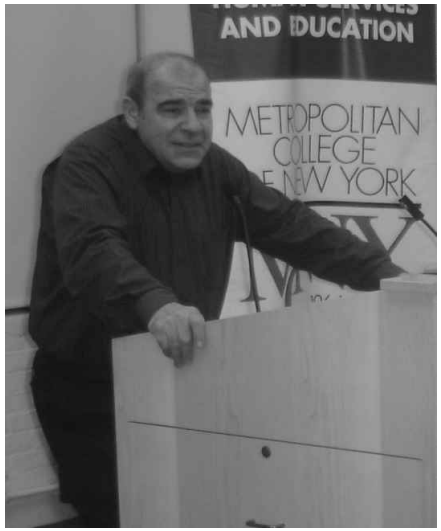
And yet he insists, soon after this, that an overall negative view of culture is not appropriate for Orthodoxy at large. Florovsky's essay then takes a turn (its originating context in all probability) from theology of culture into Ecumenics. He begins, in his customary style of drawing large intellectual typologies, to diagnose various (Protestant) attitudes of hostility towards a theology of culture characterising them in broad strokes according to four prototypes.[21] He laments this western theological tendency towards cultural 'iconoclasm', and in the course of that argument proposes one his most famous ideas: the notion that Protestantism should not shy away from culture because it fears it as a form of 'Hellenization of Christianity' [22] in the sense of a 'paganization' of the Gospel. Rather, he argued, the Church's involvement with Hellenistic civilization, in the manner of an engagement that sought constantly to turn the Hellenistic spirit of human development and intellectual curiosity into something that was baptized in Christ, and put to the service of the Gospel, [23] was part and parcel of its evangelical mission to bring the Good News of Christ to the world, and to fashion a Christian civilization which would be the destiny of the ages. 'Cultural concerns', Florovsky concludes in that study, 'Are an integral part of actual human existence and, for that reason, cannot be excluded from the Christian historical endeavour.' [24] His overall conclusion is that human culture always needs to stand under the scrutiny of the Gospel. The church is not committed to the denial of it, any more than it is able to endorse it without further qualification.

20. 'Faith and Culture.' p. 14.
21. The 'Pietistic' aversion to cultural theology, the 'Puritan' aversion, the 'Existentialist' aversion, and the 'Plain Man's' aversion.
22. He has Harnack in mind mainly, who uses this term pejoratively, to explain most of the development of early Christian theology.
23. In short his favoured phrase: 'the Christianization of Hellenism'.
24. 'Faith and Culture'. p. 26.

What is thus required for an authentic Orthodox theology of culture, would seem to be fundamentally an act of spiritual discernment based upon the concrete and specific realities appropriate in each case; each instancing of cultural formation. In this light, and given the previous observation how cultural practices inevitably institute systems of habituated behaviour which then accumulate towards long-term cultural identities, it becomes apparent why the Church needs to be in constant dialogue with the movers and shapers of 'cultural epicentres': the poets, artists, intellectuals, political leaders, scientists and philanthropists of each and every generation. This is the way in which the leaders of the Christian Church from century to century can play their part in the shaping of the cultural reflection that will go on to form the institutional values of the following generation. There is never a guarantee that the secular cultural leaders of any age will look upon the Church's leaders with anything other than disdain. In many generations past the cultural leaders have deliberately sought to mock and marginalize the Church's vast cultural experience and its deep ethical and wisdom traditions. On many occasions their response has been the even cruder answer of a bullet. It does not matter. The Church needs to be ready to offer its wisdom tradition to those who will not necessarily hear it preached from the Ambo each Sunday. It needs to be as prepared to navigate those rhetorical arenas as much as it is familiar with addressing its own faithful: and perhaps in reflecting on the syntax necessary to communicate faithfully with the un-churched, it may discover a renewal of methods of evangelising the churched at the same time.

This vocation to address the leaders and shapers of the cultural ethos in successive generations has, perhaps, been more faithfully addressed in times past than in the present era, when it has to be admitted Orthodoxy is only just emerging from the shadow of totalitarian oppressions of frightening intensity. But it is a task of pressing importance in the world of the 21st century where access to, and command of, the skills necessary to flourish in the world of high-tech media have become increasingly and imperatively important. This is a vocational challenge that falls to

our bishops and other Church leaders in the Orthodox world today; and one where they have the duty to organize, and encourage the laity, more than a need to engage in the work directly themselves. The tools of the new evangelism to the unchurched will be music, video-film, radio, instantaneous electronic exchange. These are the contemporary equivalents of the rhetoric once used by the patristic giants of our past to such monumental effect in transmitting the Christian culture across Antiquity. It is creativity here and now, that will smooth the path for building a new cultural platform where the Church's witness can shine in what will surely continue to be a swiftly evolving human society in the century to come.



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Problem Representation in Active Problem Solving

A major interest for psychologists has always been how people think and attempt to solve problems (Baron, 1998; Mayer, 1992). Rabbi Abraham Heschel once said “Show me a person with no problems and I'll show you an idiot.” At the very least, the remark highlights the fact that we as human beings are steeped in problems.Yet the word 'problem' need not be regarded with disdain. In a more neutral sense it can simply refer to a gap between a current state and a desired state. The greater part of human life seems to consist of problems. It is natural that questions arise as to how people actually deal with problems and how they ought to address them.

This paper will share some of the current thinking on that part of human problem solving known as *problem representation.* Complex human problem solving has experienced periods of intense scrutiny followed by neglect in the relatively brief history of evidence based psychology (Gardner, 1985; Sternberg & Davidson, 1995). More recently, since the so-called “cognitive revolution” of the 1970’s, the ways in which humans describe problems they face has itself received increasing attention as an important part of problem solving (Kahneman, Slovic & Tversky, 1982; Kahneman & Tversky, 2000; Newell & Simon, 1972).This component of problem solving has been referred to as “problem representation,” or sometimes as “problem framing.” Here, these terms will be used interchangably.

The aims of this paper are to (1) clarify what is meant by “problem framing” in the problem solving process, (2) identify the effects of problem framing, and (3) to examine the conditions that

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favor the emergence or non-emergence of the questions that shape problem framing and re-framing and the insights that can come from them.

Some Illustrative Examples – Problems in Search of Representation

As a beginning, consideration of some brief examples might prove useful. This will be followed by some definitions and applications.

As a first example, some may remember the "balloon boy" of October 2009. Suddenly, on many television and internet news outlets, images of a makeshift "flying saucer" were appearing. The craft was described as flying several thousand feet over the state of Colorado. It appeared to be made out of tin foil. As the story unfolded numerous commentators expressed worry about the possibility of a six year old child on board. That certainly was a "problematic situation" in the sense that it created problems and that it raised a number of questions. Law enforcement and the military were notified, and a set of activities that seemed part investigation and part rescue were set in motion. Many people seemed to be both concerned and fascinated by this event.

Another case was the report, in the same month, of a missing Airbus flight on its way to Minneapolis. This flight overshot its destination airport by 150 miles. The trajectory of the flight seemed to be erratic and the pilots failed to offer adequate explanations of what happened. The passengers did not know that anything was wrong until the plane landed, had been sequestered and groups of police came on board and started questioning passengers. Like other "problematic situations" this incident set in motion a sequence of unexpected events and consequently raised a number of questions.

A third example comes from the area of public policy. At the end of the administration of George W. Bush and at the beginning of the administration of Barack Obama there was

intense political discussion about the need for an "economic stimulus." The stimulus was supposed to be a solution, but what was the problem? Something similar occurred shortly thereafter in the field of health care: a "solution" was offered by way of health care reform, but exactly what the problem was remained unclear. Members of Congress were urged to pass a bill without having time to read it, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives at the time famously quipped that "We'll find out what is in the bill after we pass it." In this instance not only was the "problem" unclear, but so was the urgent "solution". It may turn out to have been a whole collection of problems.

An Exercise on the Importance of Problem Framing

A simple exercise reveals some interesting things about how we frame problems. In the "Titanic exercise" participants are asked to imagine that they are on the famed Titanic and that the ship has just hit an iceberg. They are then asked two questions: (1) Is there a problem? And (2) Why do you say that?

The first question has only three possible answers: "yes", "no" or "I don't know." In work with focus groups, while most respondents say that "yes" there is a problem, some respond with "no."

For those who claim that there is a problem, their responses to the second question tend to vary quite a bit. In effect, they typically provide a different "frame" to the problem or a different representation of the problem. For some, the problem was "How do I get off this ship?" For others, it was "How do I get my family off this ship?" These are quite different formulations. Someone else would say, "How do I make a boat, given that we are running out of lifeboats?"

Let us examine these different ways of formulating *the* problem. It appears that the way in which we formulate a problem orients us in different directions. If "How do I get off this ship?" is perceived as *the* problem, then moving ahead of others may be

quite important. If "How do I get my family off this ship?" is the formulation of *the* problem, then a prior concern would be finding out where they are and gathering them together. If, on the other hand, "How do I construct a boat?" is identified as the crux of the problem that may orient us towards collecting large pieces of wood. Hence the way the problem is framed makes a difference in what we are oriented to do.

Participants are then given a new problem frame: "How can we get to the largest available floatation device in the neighborhood?" For many participants, this problem frame typically seems as both annoying and unhelpful. However, some participants get an insight that might be expressed as follows: "We just hit an iceberg. The ship is sinking. The iceberg is not sinking. We just hit the largest floatation device in the neighborhood."

Sometimes, then, by changing the frame (or the question) a problem's solution comes more quickly. This phenomenon has been identified in the research literature (Dominowski & Dallob, 1995) and shown to be important for general problem solving (Davidson, 1995), as well as in mathematics (Coulombe & Berenson, 2001; Preston & Garner, 2003), in economics (Kahneman & Tversky, 2000) and in counseling contexts (Bandler & Grinder, 1982). If, on the Titanic, they actually thought that way they would have been able to use the inadequate amount of boats they had to save everyone on the ship by ferrying them to the largest available floatation device in the neighborhood – even if that turned out to be the iceberg itself.

An exercise such as this allows us to draw at least five conclusions about problem representation and its effects: (1) If we change the way we frame or represent a problem, we change the orientation of our search for a solution. (2) We can frame problems by asking questions. (3) By generating multiple questions, we generate multiple frames. (4) Since different ways of framing problems result in consequences of different effectiveness and desirability, we ought to attend to alternate problem representations and to multiple questions. (5) Arbitrarily limiting futher relevant questions restricts the problem solving process.

Melchin and Picard (2009) summarize these connections in this way:

> Learning cannot be understood simply as the transfer of information. It is a complex set of operations that unfolds on four levels: experience, understanding, verification and decision. It involves multiple feedback loops and circles that cycle and recycle us through the four levels of operations. Learning is transformative, and it alters feelings and relationships. It involves immersion in experience, but it also requires the direct insights that answer questions about experience and transform us from confusion to comprehension. Insights are answers to questions, and to yield insights, questions must be on the right track. So learning also involves the inverse insights that de-link us from misleading expectations and shift us from one line of questioning to another. (p. 128)

Defining the Issue

A *problem* consists, in part, of a current state of affairs and a desired state of affairs. In the Titanic example the current state of affairs is the ship sinking, and the desired state of affairs is getting out of there to a device or an environment that is not sinking. Problems are constitutive of human life. *Problem framing* is the process of describing a problem in terms of its current state, its desired state, possible strategies and limiting conditions (Newell & Simon, 1972). Problem representation or framing has found application in fields as divergent as economics (Kahneman & Tversky, 2000), counseling (Bandler & Grinder, 1982) and conflict resolution (Melchin & Picard, 2009). *Interrogatory Problem Analysis (IPA)* is a way of framing problems in terms of questions (Grallo, 2006). Multiple questions allow for multiple problem frames as well as multiple routes to problem solution (Adams,

2009). Multiple questions and their associated frames can generate multiple possibilities, and point the way to evaluating issues of fact and value, as well as to specifically targeted action that transforms both situation and self (Friedlander & Tabach, 2001).

To clarify the role of problem framing, we can revisit our examples.

In the case of "balloon boy," the first reports were surrounded by questions that inquired into what *might* be going on. These questions sought meaningful possibilities that could explain what was happening. At some point, we may wish to settle the issue by correctly answering reflective questions of fact: What is really going on here? Is there really a child up in that apparatus? How do we find out? What do we do based on possible or probable scenarios? Has any law been broken? And beyond this we may wish to transform the situation by intervening. What are we going to do about it? Also, when investigators found out what had happened prior to this flight, the question was raised as to what to do with the parents.

Similar findings can be noted in the airbus example. At first, there was a wave of questions generating a set of possibilities about what might be going on. A second wave of evaluative questions aimed to resolve issues of fact and value. Such would likely be posed by members of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), who are charged with investigating a wide variety of travel mishaps and misadventures. Such investigations naturally lead to questions about interventions that will insure that incidents of this type do not recur.

These same principles associated with seeking meaningful possibilities, settling the issue and transforming the situation can be applied to the economic stimulus. The 2008-2009 stimulus package consisted of many hundreds of pages, much of which was not read by many legislators. Yet there was no clear statement about the problems being addressed. Some specific problems were identified along the way, but they may require very different interventions. This pattern recurred with the 2009-2010 health care debate. Relatively little attention has been paid to developing a

clear statement about what the problems are that are being addressed.

Some Implications Based on the Emergence or Non-Emergence of Relevant Further Questions

There are some social implications for conscientious problem framing or its neglect. First, since problems are a normal part of human life, then honest engagement with problems is to be encouraged. Students who seriously work on a research paper or dissertation routinely engage in careful problem framing: describing current and desired states, possible strategies for solution and limiting conditions. Often these representations are formulated as research questions to be answered. In effect, the research question is the driver (or operator) of the entire research enterprise. If the question is unclear, or if there are no questions, any research effort is likely to flounder.

Second, human problems typically involve a gap in either our understanding, knowledge (factual or moral) or practice (Grallo, 2010). Problem solving involves attempts to fill those gaps.

Third, honest engagement with a problem requires taking the time to frame or represent the problem. Examples of mis-diagnosis in medicine are often examples of difficulties in problem framing (Kohn, Corrigan & Donaldson, 1999; Stelfox et al., 2006). There one might encounter situations involving an intervention for a problem that does not exist, or failure to detect a problem that does exist.

Fourth, some attitudes are hostile to problem framing: impatience for answers, an unwillingness to suspend judgment as facts are gathered, and disrespect for the primacy of the desire to know. Finally, those who adopt these attitudes are at a greater risk for "mis-learning" (Grallo, 2006a, 2010; Melchin & Picard, 2010) than those who practice the opposite attitudes of tolerance of

uncertainty, willingness to wait for the evidence and a respect for the desire to know.

In summary, to be conscientious about problem framing is a part of being conscientious about problems and the process of attempting to solve them. The alternatives, while typically "easier", often result in persons rushing to and fro on the deck of a sinking ship in frantic search of "solutions", when a more satisfying solution may be something they just bumped into.

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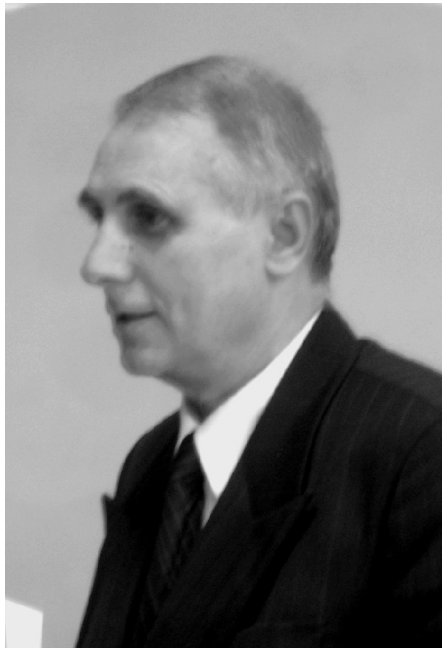

Ioan N. Roşca

IOAN N. ROŞCA

La religion dans le contexte des valeurs politiques démocratiques

1. Homo religiosus

Chaque homme naturellement formé est, aussi, *homo religiosus*.

On pourrait objecter qu'il y a non seulement des adeptes d'une certaine religion, mais aussi des libres penseurs et des athéistes.

Mais les libres penseurs sont plutôt des hommes *areligieux*, parce qu'ils ne nient nécessairement l'existence du Dieu, mais soutient qu'ils admettent seulement les réalités qui sont admissibles par leur libre pensée. Donc, les areligieux peuvent être aussi des religieux, alors qu'ils admettent un Dieu dans les limites de la pensée humaine.

Les athéistes peuvent être considérés comme tels parce qu'ils nient l'existence du Dieu. Mais ils sont conséquents avec leur point de vue?

Par *homo religiosus* je comprends, comme pensait Mircea Eliade, l'adepte d'une religion consacrée, qui croit dans la transcendance divine, comme dans une réalité absolue, qui dépasse les réalités concrètes-sensibles, mais qui se manifeste dans elles et leurs donne un sens.

Dans l'acception mentionnée, les athéistes refusent ils vraiment la transcendance divine, ou ils l'admettent, mais dans l'autre hypostase que celle soutenue par la religion? Ils refusent véritablement la transcendance soutenue par la religion, la transcendance qui dépasse le monde donné, ils réduisent le monde aux réalités relatives et considèrent qu'ils sont les sujets de

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l'histoire. Mais, en niant l'absolu divin, ils y substituent un autre absolu, l'absolu de leur propre subjectivité. Donc, ils nient une transcendance objective, divine, mais ils admettent une transcendance subjective, une transcendance dans l'immanence, exclusivement immanente.

D'avantage, les athéistes tendent, soit même inconsciemment, à diviniser cette transcendance subjective, soit même par le fait qu'ils la représentent comme le substitute de la transcendance objective. Donc, ils nient un Dieu objectif, qu'ils dépassent, mais ils reconnaissent, soit même implicitement, sans le déclarer expressément, un Dieu subjectif, immanent, qui se trouve dans l'âme de chaque homme.

Plus encore, les athéistes admettent inconsciemment aussi un Dieu transcendent à la mesure où ils divinisent, comme le font les areligieux, les unes des fêtes ou d'autres manifestations humaines.

Dans ce sens, le fait que l'homme areligieux de nôtres jours conserve quelque chose de la manière d'être de l'homme religieux est affirmé et met en évidence par Mircea Eliade dans son livre *Le Sacré et le profane*. Il observe que l'homme areligieux actuel donne aux unes de ses fêtes qui ont devenues laïques, comme est le Réveillon, la signification d'une sortie du temps relatif et d'un recommencement, d'une rentrée dans un autre temps, un temps absolu. Similairement, Eliade remarque aussi le fait que, dans autres cas, l'homme areligieux conserve dans une manière camouflée les unes des réminiscences de l'homme religieux par ses préférences pour certains livres, ou pour certains spectacles de théâtre ou de film, qu'il les idéalise, et que par les uns des ses comportements laïques, comme le nudisme, il trahit sa nostalgie pour le Paradis perdu.

Il est à remarquer que chaque homme qui se proclame d'être non religieux, comme chaque athéiste, reste, même inconsciemment, un homme religieux dans la mesure qu'il cultive le bien et les autres valeurs positives comme valeurs absolues, parce'qu' il reconnait ainsi quelque chose transcendante absolue, un Dieu qui se trouve en nous et, aussi, au dé là de nous.

Bien sûr, les différences proclamées et effectives entre l'homme religieux, d'une part, et celui non religieux ou athéiste, d'autre part, restent, mais, en conformité avec les arguments apportés, l'opposition entre les deux catégories est seulement relative et non pas absolue.

2. Les causes de la diminution de la religiosité de l'homme contemporain

Comme on sait, dans le présent, le nombre des hommes non religieux ou ireligieux s'accroît.

Dans la suite, je me référerai aux causes de la diminution de la religiosité de l'homme contemporain.

Une cause de fond, mais quelque peu invisible, par laquelle l'homme modern, depuis la Renaissance, est devenu moins religieux réside en la spécificité de la société moderne. Fondée sur les relations économiques capitalistes et, donc, sur concurrence, la société moderne développe incessant la vie productive. Par conséquent, les hommes ont pu dominer d'avantage les forces destructives de la nature et, toutefois, ils ont pu se réaliser de plus en plus par eux-mêmes, par leur travail et par leur initiative et ainsi ils ont pu d'augmenter la croyance en eux-mêmes et d'affaiblir la croyance en une force transcendance, divine.

À côté du fond économique, l'état du type moderne, avec ses institutions d'éducation, d'enseignement et de culture constitue le facteur social décisif de l'affaiblissement de la croyance religieuse. En principal, il s'agit d'état capitaliste démocratique, qui, par sa séparation d'église, offre une éducation prépondérante scientifique et non religieuse, sinon même i religieuse.

D'autre part, il s'agit aussi de l'état socialiste, qui, par ses institutions d'enseignement et de culture, a déroulé en permanence une propagande antireligieuse et a fait une éducation athéiste, quoiqu'il a laissé l'église de fonctionner.

Actuellement, l'état roumain a introduit dans l'enseignement la religion comme matière optative, mais il n'y a pas dans toutes les institutions scolaires des professeurs de religion avec suffisante expérience pédagogique et, donc, bien préparés pour une éducation efficiente.

La famille moderne a une fonction éducative-religieuse restreinte parce que les femmes, le principal facteur éducatif des leurs enfants, sont manquées de temps suffisant pour l'éducation, étant engagées dans les divers domaines d'activité.

En fin, mais non pas dans la dernière ligne, les contemporains jouent un rôle important dans le processus d'affaiblissement ou même de la perte du sentiment religieux. Si l'homme actuel se contentera avec les satisfactions liées de sa maison, des ses équipements de cousine, des ses pièces de mobilier, du son automobile, des ses plaisirs sensibles, s'il se consolera avec l'idée que la satisfaction des exigences spirituelles n'aurait même indispensable, alors il ne sentirait ni l'absence de l'esprit religieux. S'il ne se dédie aussi à la culture de son âme, alors ni l'état, ni les institutions scolaires, ni l'église ne pouvaient pas avoir une trop grande influence sur lui.

Il est à remarquer, aussi, que les uns des ceux qui s'écartent de religion dans une ou l'autre des ses formes traditionnelles cherchent et découvrent dans la littérature spirituelle-religieuse des autres moyens de s'approcher de Dieu. Comme les cultes néo protestants, cette littérature met l'accent sur la divinité qui se trouve dans l'âme de chaque homme, en récusant les uns des attributs accordé au Dieu par les religions officielles, surtout le caractère de juge et de punisseur.

L'état avec ses institutions et les individus, soit créateurs, soit seulement récepteurs de culture, peuvent déterminer la diminution de la religiosité non seulement par leur orientation préférentielle vers autres valeurs que celles religieuses, mais aussi par la promouvoir de chaque classe des valeurs spirituelles dans son horizon singulier et irréductible, et non par sa connexion avec les valeurs religieux. Ainsi, ils peuvent cultiver, d'une part, les valeurs non religieux dans l'esprit de l'indifférentisme religieux ou

même dans l'esprit i religieux , comme dans les pays qui ont été socialistes.

Tandis que l'affirmation effective des diverses types des valeurs dépend des hommes et des institutions, la possibilité de leur affirmation soit séparée et divergente, soit dans la connexion avec la religion est dépendante de la nature de chaque espèce des valeurs, car chaque espèce est une sorte de monade: fermée en soi, mais, toutefois, ouverte vers l'harmonisation avec les autres.

Comme on sait, chaque des formes de la valeur et de la culture satisfait un certain besoin matérielle ou spirituelle et provient d'une certaine faculté de l'âme, qui est autonome par rapport aux autres. Par exemple, la science se fonde sur l'intellect, les créations artistiques – sur le sentiment du beau et sur l'imagination, la morale – sur la conscience et sur la volonté, la religion – sur la croyance, la philosophie authentique – sur la raison, mais une raison qui ne contredise pas ni la science, ni la morale.

Toutefois, les formes et les valeurs de la culture sont complémentaires, parce que les diverses facultés de l'âme qui leur correspondent – la raison et la passion, la raison et la croyance etc. – ne sont pas nécessairement en contradiction, mais plutôt elles s'intensifient réciproquement ou, en même cas, elles se concilient dans l'intérieur d'une et même âme créatrice et aimante de culture. Autrement, le sujet humain ne serait pas unitaire, mais chaque de ses facultés constituerait un sujet indépendante.

Donc, autant par leur autonomie, que par la corrélation des leur contenus subjectives, les formes de la valeur et de la culture ne se trouvent pas virtuellement en conflit.

Mais, quoique par leur nature intrinsèque les types des valeurs ne s'entrechoquent pas et ne se désunissent pas, pourtant, dans leur processus de réalisation, à cause de la manière dont les hommes utilisent leur autonomie ou leur solidarité, les unes peuvent s'affirmer en dépit des autres, entre elles peuvent exister des contradictions.

Ainsi, du fait que les formes de la valeur et de la culture sont autonomes et irréductibles, il en résulte que le développement

des unes n'implique pas automatiquement élévation aussi des autres. En l'espèce, surabondance de la science contemporaine ne produit pas ni l'élévation de la religion, ni l'élévation de la morale, de l'art, ou de la philosophie.

Davantage, si les hommes transforment les différances qui existent entre les valeurs en oppositions et s'ils orientent les types des valeurs préférées non dans le sens de la collaboration avec les autres, mais dans le sens de l'indifférence ou même de l'antipathie, alors, ils appauvriront, à nouveau, la sphère des valeurs et s'affirmeront eux même unilatéralement. Dans le cas que nous avons en vue, l'affirmation de la science, de l'art, de la morale laïque, de la philosophie en opposition avec la religion peut minimiser la conscience religieuse, ainsi qu'elle peut diminuer aussi même l'envergure et la substance de créations non religieux. Inversement, la culture de la religion en opposition avec les créations non religieux minimise ceux créations, mais aussi mine la force que la religion pourrait gagner par le contact avec les autres.

3. Le développement de la conscience religieuse dans ses rapports avec les autres valeurs culturelles

a) Le rapport entre la religion et la science

Je considère que dans un état démocratique, qui accorde une pleine liberté pour toutes les formes d'expression de la créativité humaine, n'ayant pas aucun intérêt pour les opposer, la conscience religieuse peut se développer non seulement par l'éducation et la pratique religieuse, mais aussi par l'intermède des autres formes de la conscience et de la création spirituelle.

Centrée sur intellect, la culture excessive de la science développe seulement l'intellect, non pas les autres facultés subjectives. En ce qui concerne le rapport entre la science et la religion, on a posé même la question si l'esprit scientifique tolère le sentiment religieux. Mais les deux forces de la subjectivité humaine ont des sphères différentes d'application: l'esprit

scientifique se réfère à l'un ou à l'autre des domaines de l'existence, tandis que la croyance et le sentiment religieux se réfèrent à l'ensemble de l'existence. Donc, par la faculté constitutive et par la sphère d'application, la science ne stimule automatiquement la religion, mais elle ni ne l'exclure point. La science peut contribuer à la conservation et à la stimulation du sentiment religieux par les idées qui dénotent le rôle décisif joué par la conscience sociale, y compris par la religion, sur l'existence socio-humaine, sur le sens de l'existence humaine et aussi par les réflexions plus générales, métathéoriques, par lesquelles les savants peuvent intégrer les découvertes scientifiques sur l'ordre fini des domaines du monde dans l'ordre transfini, incompréhensible scientifiquement, divine.

Bien sûr, la question peut être posée aussi inversement, en concernant le rapport du côté de la religion vers la science, si la religion exclue la science. Le répons sera symétrique : la religion n'implique automatiquement le développement de la science, mais elle ni ne l'exclure point. La religion peut être stimulante pour la science, s'elle, la religion, n'adoptera pas une attitude excessive et exclusiviste, en soutenant qu'elle est la seule apte de pénétrer les mystères de l'existence, mais, au contrairement, elle encouragera elle ni ne l'exclure point à la recherche de la vérité, à l'esprit réflexif, méditatif, en s'accommodant elle-même avec les nouvelles découverts scientifiques, sans séparer le monde divin du monde terrain, la divinité de l'homme et du monde de l'homme.

b) Le rapport entre la religion et l' art

L'art, à son tour, peut incorporer certaines valences religieux, comme aussi morales ou philosophiques, sans sacrifier sa spécificité irréductible. L'art même aurait de gagner s'il manifestera toute sa force en contact avec la religion et les autres valeurs, plutôt que par un jeu pur, gratuit, manqué d'esprit religieux, ou moral, ou philosophique.

La religion, à son tour, a été et est en faveur de l'art, au moins par son culte, par laquelle appelle à la peinture, à la sculpture, à l'architecture, à la musique, à la poésie.

Le bénéfice réciproque de la relation entre religion et l'art est illustré, parmi les autres, de penture et de sculpture sur des thèmes religieux de Moyenne Âge, de Renaissance et, pratiquement, de tous les temps. Les unes des sculptures de Michelangelo, par exemple Piéta, Moise, David, sont d'une grande complexité et perfection artistique par l'énorme talent de l'artiste renaissant, mais elles gagnent en profondeur aussi par les personnages religieux qu'elles représentent. L'assemblée sculpturale réalisée par Brancusi à Târgu-Jiu, La Colonne de l' Infini, La Porte du Baiser et La Table de la Silence, reste éternel aussi par ses significations profondément religieux.

c) Le rapport entre la religion et la morale

Par sa nature, en mesure dans laquelle on se pose le problème d'une source autant des ses valeurs, des ses lois et des ses normes, que de la récompense/punition pour le fait de respecter/d'enfreindre toutes celles-ci, la morale implique ou la philosophie, s'elle trouve cette source dans l'homme lui-même, en espèce dans l'homme générique, ou la religion, s'elle cherche cette source dans le Dieu. Évidemment, seulement l'explication religieuse, qui appelle à une source absolue, peut attribuer aux valeurs et normes morales un caractère aussi absolu.

Donc, la morale ne contredit pas la religion si elle ne s'affirme comme une morale exclusivement laïque, en ignorant son fond ultime, absolu, qui est surhumain, divin. Autrement, elle met en évidence et stimule l'affirmation de la conscience religieuse.

D'autre part, la religion influencera favorablement la morale, à l'exception de la situation qu'elle, la religion, s'altérera par fanatisme et par l'intolérance.

d) La relation entre la religion et la philosophie

Par l'objet de leur investigation et même par leurs moyens de connaissance, la philosophie et la religion plutôt différent qu'elles s'opposent. Ainsi, l'objet le plus général à qui se

rapportent les deux est le transcendent, mais qui la philosophie connote en sens laïque, tandis que la religion le divinise. En ce qui concerne les moyens de connaissance, c'est l'opposition qui apparut sur premier plaine, parce que la philosophie se rapporte au transcendent par la raison, tandis que la religion – par croyance. Mais ni la raison philosophique n'exclue pas la croyance, en admettant qu'il y a de quelque chose inconcevable, ni la religion n'exclue pas la raison, à mesure dans laquelle, par la théologie, elle cherche des arguments concevables dans le faveur de la croyance dans l'existence du Dieu.

D'ailleurs, en ce qui concerne l'attitude de la philosophie à l'égard de la religion, dans le cours du processus historico-philosophique, presque tous les philosophes, soit anciens, soit modernes, ont admis l'existence de la divinité. À peine dans la période contemporaine, la séparation entre les deux formes de la connaissance est devenue aiguë. La plupart des orientations philosophiques ont renoncé à l'idée de Dieu, mais, pourtant, cette idée a été conservée dans quelques unes importantes orientations philosophico-religieuses, comme sont le néothomisme, le personnalisme, l'existentialisme religieux.

Il est vrai, le Dieu philosophique n'est pas identique avec le Dieu religieux, étant conçu comme facteur spirituel impersonnel, et non comme personne. Les philosophes modernes, par exemple, ont conçu l'existence du Dieu d'habitude en sens déiste, et parfois, panthéiste. En même cas, à côté des attributs qu'on s'accorde à chaque transcendent, soit laïque, soit religieux, par exemple: inné, éternel, unique, unitaire etc., les plus nombreux penseurs modernes, une exception étant Spinoza, ont associé le point de vue philosophique avec le point de vue religieux, en accordant au transcendent aussi des attributs anthropomorphes, donc personnels, comme la bonté, la volonté, la finalité etc.

Par conséquent, on peut dire que seulement la philosophie matérialiste et athéiste entre en conflit ouvert avec la religion.

D'autre part, ni la religion n'est pas opposée toujours à la philosophie. On parait que l'attitude des religieux est, pourtant, moindre tolérante en face de la philosophie, que l'attitude des

philosophes en face de la religion. Mais les plus instruits sacerdoces ont essayé et essayent un *modus vivendi* entre les deux modalités d'affirmation de l'être humaine.

Une religion qui serait hostile à la philosophie ou à la science risquerait rompre la divinité de l'homme réel, qui est ancré dans le milieu social et naturel, ainsi comme il est considéré à travers le prisme des valeurs philosophique.

Parce que les valeurs non religieux et celles religieux n'entrent en interaction par eux même, il est nécessaire que les hommes, aussi que l'état avec ses institutions, cultivient tant les unes, autant que les autres dans leur convergence et nullement dans l'esprit des oppositions et des tensions réciproques.

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Nietzsche, this Forgetful, Musical Socrates

> Every philosophy also conceals a philosophy;
> every opinion is also a lurking place,
> every word is also a mask.
> (Nietzsche, 1989: 289)

1. Heidegger's Verdict on Nietzsche or a Case in Misreading

In the conclusion to the four volumes of a close reading of Nietzsche's corpus, Heidegger asks the question whether Nietzsche's metaphysics has overcome nihilism (1982:200). He considers that Nietzsche was under the illusion that, by excluding Being as such as a devalued value from thinking the being of beings which is not nothing but will to power eternally recurring, the essence of metaphysics as nihilism was overcome (201). Thus Heidegger:

> Nietzsche's fundamental experience says that the being is a being as will to power in the mode of the eternal recurrence of the same. As a being in this form it is not nothing. Consequently, nihilism, to the degree there is supposed to be nothing to beings as such, is excluded from the foundations of such metaphysics. Thus, it would seem, metaphysics has overcome nihilism (201).

Heidegger further engages on the task of demonstrating that Nietzsche does not even address the question of Being as such and that the *nihil* in nihilism is not thought in its essence. Being thought as value and being as a whole as will to power in the mode of eternal recurrence "block him from the path that leads to thinking Being as such" (199).

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Let us follow Heidegger's argument more closely. Heidegger understands Being as such as unconcealment which veils itself into concealment in the essence of man, its main "abode" (217,244). It remains a "promise" (244) and a "mystery" (226, 233). Metaphysics is the history of this concealment of Being as such, the history of this omission which he calls "nihilism proper" (205) or "authentic nihilism." Metaphysics which is ontology and theology at the same time posits the Being as such as the transcendental and the transcendent respectively (211) and thus repudiates the thinking, questioning of the Being as such. It thinks only the "being there," the *Dasein* (218). With modern age, from Descartes to Hegel, metaphysics evolves as a metaphysics of subjectivity in which being itself is defined as will (205). Nietzsche does not overcome metaphysics, nor nihilism since metaphysics is precisely nihilism as the history of omission of Being as such. This omission is not a problem of thinking (213) but manifests the default of Being as such (216), the veiling of its unconcealment. Moreover, the desire of reversing, or opposing metaphysics indicates an "inauthentic nihilism."(223-6) "Inauthentic nihilism" means the omission of the omission (226-7). In other words, the definition of the *Dasein* as will to power in the mode of eternal recurrence of the same interprets the concealment, the veiling of unconcealment of Being as such, as its absolute absence. The equation of the Being as such with value sanctions in Nietzsche's view the liberation of *Dasein* from Being as such and the latter's dependence, as value, on the former, thus reversing the relation between the two. In this way, Nietzsche's metaphysics does not overcome nihilism rather fulfills it. As will to power eternally recurring, it is a negative ontotheology of the death of Being as such and of the death of god (210). Being/god as value indicates the last stage in the history of metaphysics which leaves the Being as such unthought and takes its concealment as complete absence. Nietzsche's nihilism is thus inauthentic (231), i.e. it does not think nihilism in its essence, as the default of Being. An authentic nihilism would imply the infinite questioning of the concealment/unconcealment of Being. Heidegger writes:

> Such acknowledging means allowing Being to reign in all its *questionableness* from the point of view of its essential provenance; it means persevering in the question of Being. But that means to reflect on the origin of *presencing* and permanence and thus to keep thinking open to the possibility that Being, on its way to the as Being, might abandon its essence in favor of a *more primordial determination*. Any discussion of Being itself always remains *interrogative*. (201)

Heidegger argues that Being needs to "abandon its own essence in favor of a more primordial determination (201), one that would include the nihil and that therefore nihilism cannot be overcome. Thus, Nietzsche's program of overcoming nihilism is abortive ex officio. What is Nietzsche's own understanding of *nihilism* and of *overcoming*? Heidegger believes that Nietzsche "experiences nihilism as the history of the devaluation of the highest values and thinks of the overcoming of nihilism as a countermovement in the form of the revaluation of all previous values" (200). Is this assessment of Nietzsche's dissatisfaction with previous evaluation and his program of revaluation correct? Interestingly, Heidegger himself, unawares, points in the direction of a different answer. He remarks in passing that "the inmost core of Nietzsche's metaphysics ... still lies concealed" (12) in his posthumous notes and that "Being remains in the glare of concepts, indeed in the radiance of the absolute concept of speculative dialectics, unthought" (213).

The present essay endeavors to question Heidegger's verdict and its relevance for Nietzsche's mode of discourse as a whole. It will try to prove that Nietzsche's metaphysics as nihilism—in the sense the former uses the term—is an authentic nihilism which he does not intend to overcome rather to re-awaken. The Nietzschean nihilism in need of overcoming is a version of the Heideggerian "everydayness" and refers precisely to the growing inauthenticity of ontotheological metaphysics which does not take the *nihil* seriously. Overcoming the prevalent ontotheological metaphysics requires no less than the re-creation

of its mythical foundations. If successful, it would initiate precisely the questioning Heidegger desires and would make Nietzsche a Heideggerian *avant la lettre*. His doctrines viewed as new myths of creation and redemption are meant to be the spurs in reopening the question of Being and the *nihil*.

2. Deleuze's Version of Nietzsche's Mode of Discourse as an Experiment in Counter-conceptual Thinking

Nietzsche's text is a provocation, intrinsically iconoclastic. In the best prophetic tradition it brings war and good news. It destroys and creates new meaning, new tracks for thought. It awakens to the question of truth rather than enthroning a new truth, a future idol. In order to address Nietzsche's metaphysics, a preliminary condition is to become aware that the Nietzschean mode of discourse is not the discourse of the philosophical treatise. Deleuze offers one of the most pertinent characterizations of Nietzsche's writing. In *Nomad Thought* Deleuze hails Nietzsche's liberating the unconscious from the burden of transcendence and for having invented "nomad thought", "a mode of thinking that is without logical or metaphysical precedent" (206). Nomad thought is characterized by its "impulse to decodify, its rejection of interiority and its preoccupation with pulsions of power rather than intellectual constructs" (206). Consider:

> Nietzsche's thinking undoes encrypted philosophical concepts by transmitting uncodifiable states of experience not to a new notional language but to a new body, Nietzsche's own or that of the earth. Differing from both representation and formal argument that take the subject or consciousness as a starting point, Nietzsche's thought and writing are grounded in "an immediate relation with the exterior"...The human subject...is a play of forces and proper names are merely designations for pulsional intensities inscribed upon a body that may be individual, collective, or terrestrial. (207)

Thus "nomadism" is "a style of counterconceptual thinking" (207), "a line of flight, a thinking away from received philosophical distinctions" (206). Nomad thought is then the counterconceptual thought which rebels against conceptual reification of meaning. It restlessly metamorphosizes from one symbol or mask to another in order to prevent the stabilization of meaning and gives the impression of a "masque-rade". Nomad thought engages the pursuer in a maddening hide-and-seek for the true face behind the mask. In other words, nomad thought invites a genealogical reading of Nietzsche's overt doctrines identified by Heidegger as the "five main rubrics" of his metaphysics, i.e. "nihilism, revaluation of all values hitherto, will to power, eternal recurrence of the same and Overman" (1982:9). Such a search for origins, whose founder Nietzsche declared himself to be, involves the suspicion that one cannot take any of his statements at face value. It takes a Nietzsche to read Nietzsche. To read Nietzsche means to read "a storm pregnant with new lightnings" (Nietzsche, 1989:258) whose meaning is ever retreating, ever luring one beyond the last horizon.

3. The Birth and Death of Tragedy: Dionysius versus Socrates

It seems that it is not Being as such that has been devalued in the history of ontotheology, rather the concept of Being as such due to the inherent reification of meaning. An indication of this possible reading of Nietzsche's corpus is grounded in *The Birth of Tragedy* where the tyranny of the *nihil*—in Nietzsche's terms and not Heidegger's—originates with conceptual thinking symbolized by the "ugly Socrates", the theoretical man. Nietzsche's earliest work*, The Birth of Tragedy* bears unmistakably the mark of Schopenhauer's philosophy of voluntarism and nihilism borrowed wholesale from Oriental sources. In *The World as Will and Idea*, Schopenhauer promotes the idea of a Buddhist double perspective epistemology i.e., of the reality of nothingness on the one hand and that of the will and cosmic illusion on the other. Without fully

endorsing this doctrine Nietzsche interprets the perfected form of Greek tragedy of Aeschylus and Sophocles as a mythic symbol of totality. Totality requires the synthesis of the ground of ultimate reality and the phenomenon of individuality; in other words, the consciousness of primordial, ultimate oneness/nothingness and the consciousness of the *principium individuorum* as transitory. In his theory of *catharsis* Aristotle considered the effect of tragedy as purging the soul of passions through intense empathic exposure to pity and terror. Nietzsche mentions Aristotle's *catharsis* only to oppose it. He welcomes the "metaphysical comfort" of intense participation in the necessary unfolding where Being and nothingness engage in a tragic play of concealment and revealing—not unlike the Heideggerian presencing and veiling—precisely on the ground of arousing passions rather than quieting them. Dionysian truth is the tragic truth of a Being defined more primordially. Such a more primordial Being includes the nothing as ground and source of itself. At the same time the Greek tragedy that Nietzsche has in mind is not a conceptual, systematic disquisition. It is a mythic saying which constantly immerses itself and the spectator back into the indistinctness and totality of music. Certainly, for Nietzsche this immersion into the prelinguistic is neither a commendation to mystical union nor to abstract transcendence. The tragic performance precludes the reification of the answer as well as the separation of Being and nothing, of concealed Being and its revelation. Art, i.e. tragic art, is the unique locus of the unfolding of this double perspective metaphysics, its principal embodiment. Nietzsche laments in this early work the loss of this tragic awareness and with it of the sense of wonder, awe, of the sublime. The one accused of this murder is Socrates, the arch symbol of the theoretical, abstract, disembodied mind. The nothingness that Nietzsche aims to overcome is Socratic nothingness. It is net of the conceptual spider. As a parenthesis, Nietzsche's project of overcoming Socratic nothingness and the later Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* share a similar intention. The difference between Nietzsche and Schelling resides mainly in the mode of overcoming which, in the former case, takes the form of

artistic performance: therefore, a masked performance which would resuscitate tragic myth. Nietzsche considers that the death of religions as mythical formulations of meaning happens when myth loses its power through doctrinal closure:

> when under the stern, intelligent eye of an orthodox dogmatism the mythical premises of a religion are systematized as a sum total of historical events; when one begins to defend the credibility of the myths while one opposes any continuation of their natural vitality and growth, when accordingly the feeling of myth perishes and its place is taken by the claim of religion to historical foundations. (1989: 36)

Myth died "under the hands of Euripides" (1995:36) who manifested in art the demon of Socrates (42) for whom "to be beautiful everything must be intelligible" (43). The Socratic identification of knowledge and virtue, knowledge and beauty springs forth through "penetrating critical process, daring intelligibility, rationalistic method, conscious knowledge" (43). Socrates as "the theoretical man" opposed to Dionysian tragic art (46) is the symbol of conceptual knowledge. He represents the "sublime metaphysical illusion that with the clue of logic, *thinking can reach to the nethermost depths of being*" (53). The event of the concept and the enthronement of its rule are presented in dramatic terms as a cosmic catastrophe. Thus, after Socrates who is "the turning point/vortex of universal history" (53), "a common net of thought was stretched over the entire globe" (53). For theoretical man for whom to distinguish true perception from illusion becomes the noblest calling (54), error becomes the evil par excellence (54). In the Euripides-Socrates complex, Nietzsche is mourning the death of tragedy. By tragedy he understands both Dionysian metaphysics which gives a more primordial determination of Being to include the nothing and its mythical medium which prohibits the "evil slumbering at the heart of theoretical knowledge" (66). Or, translated in Heideggerian terms, tragedy is a locus of presencing and veiling of the default of Being

as such, a metaphysics qua authentic nihilism which perseveres in the questioning and preserves the enigma.

4. Untimely Meditations: The Art of Forgetting versus the Historical

On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life is another early text that contains a key to Nietzsche's later development. Here the excess of history is opposed to a creative life of great deeds. One of the various ways to misconstrue Nietzsche centers round an apparent contradiction in his understanding of the body and extends to his infamous slave-master morality. It, too, springs—as in Heidegger's case—from overlooking the specific game of disguisements witnessed in *The Birth of Tragedy*. It can be dispelled by listening more carefully to the present text. Edith Wyschogrod gives a quick summary of Nietzsche's genealogical probing into the value of pity, the main feature of Christian morality. She explains that "on his view, pity is the emotion that is felt when a desire for revenge is suppressed" (100) and quotes from the *Genealogy of Morals*: "Impotence which cannot retaliate is turned into kindness; pussilanimity into humility". The reason for this impotence to react promptly is found in a deterioration of health, a slackening of instinctual life correlated with "an excessive development of consciousness and the hypertrophy of reason" (100). Inner and institutional repression creates a new human type, the man of *ressentiment* (101). Wyschogrod detects the root of Nietzsche's defective argument against altruism/pity in his limited and fictional anthropology, the "tacit presuppositions in Nietzsche's description of the body" (101). Consider:

> It can be argued against Nietzsche that he has given to the body too narrow an interpretation. His account cordons off a feature of corporeality intrinsic to it: the body's vulnerability. To be as embodied existence, as

> flesh, is to be vulnerable. This is not a property of diseased bodies but of bodies generally. While Nietzsche acknowledges and even celebrates death, he segregates the phenomena of vulnerability -- sensitivity to temperature, fatigue, exhaustion, sleep and the like -- from death itself. These phenomena are treated metaphysically in the manner of nonbeing. (103-4)

And further:

> For Nietzschean vitalism human existence is a perpetual self-overcoming, an activity that neither sleeps nor slumbers...But life thus interpreted is based on one of its pathological conditions, unceasing wakefulness or insomnia. (104)

Wyschogrod notes the exclusion of the dark side of the physiology as a paradox in a thinker who "works to undermine the power of memory...because it makes possible a delay in the expression of affect" (104-5) and emphasizes the fundamental importance of forgetfulness. She complains that

> Nietzsche confers normative value on the very phenomenon he criticizes with respect to memory, the phenomenon of unceasing activity when such activity is attributed to the body. A hypertrophied wakefulness is transvalued when it is ascribed to bodily life. (105)

On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life is one of his "untimely," i.e., "that is to say acting counter to our time and thereby acting on our time and let's hope, for the benefit of a time to come" (1996:60), "meditations. " His overt thesis is that

> the unhistorical and the suprahistorical are the natural antidotes to the stifling of life by the historical, by the malady of history. (120-1)

He initiates the process of decoding his text and volunteers one insight into its meaning:

> With the word "unhistorical" I designate the art and power of forgetting and of enclosing oneself within a bounded horizon; I call "suprahistorical" the powers which lead the eye away from becoming towards that which bestows upon existence the character of the eternal and the stable, towards art and religion. (120)

We are made aware that Nietzsche withdraws behind a series of masks which are different codifications of his ideas. The unhistorical is the art of forgetting; the historical, consequently, the art of memory. What do we find when we look behind the mask of forgetting and that of memory?

> A historical phenomenon, known clearly and completely and resolved into a phenomenon of knowledge is for him who has perceived it, dead... History become pure sovereign science would be for mankind a sort of conclusion of life and a settling of accounts with it. (1996:67)

The sleeplessness of history or memory is an image/mask for abstraction, generalization, pure objectivity, mediacy; in excess, it is inimical to life; it creates passivity, a sense of epigonism and indifference; it is the opposite of art; it transforms the living creature into a thinking animal, a "cogital" (119), human beings into "thinking-, writing- and speaking machines" (85); it kills intuition, neuters (87), creates a race of eunuchs" (86), "hollows out" (87),"paralyses"(98). The profusion of indirect, unlived events takes away the "strangeness" (98), the "surprise." It is the "great cross-spider at the node of the cosmic web" (108), the "devil" (114). The excess of memory or history brings about the extinction of life and, with it, the birth of an age of irony (100) and of "the grey-haired race" (101,116). The blueprint for Nietzsche's later nihilism (98-100) is sketched out: it is the dead

fruit of the sleeplessness of conceptual idolatry, of the obsession with pure objectivity (84). The main consequence, like in the case of *The Birth of Tragedy*, is the incapacity for the sublime. He explains:

> Expressed morally: you are no longer capable of holding on the *sublime*, your deeds are shortlived explosions, not rolling thunder. Though the greatest and *most miraculous* event should occur -- it must nonetheless descend, silent and unsung into Hades. For art flees away if you immediately conceal your deeds under the awning of history. He who wants to understand, grasp and assess in a moment that before which he ought to stand long *in awe as before an incomprehensible sublimity* may be called reasonable, but only in the sense in which Schiller speaks of the rationality of the reasonable man: there are things which he does not see which even a child sees... (1996:83) [italics mine]

Nietzsche makes it clear that the art of forgetting -- or of the unhistorical -- is the art of the cow, child and artist of great deeds.

> That is why it affects him [man] like a vision of a lost paradise to see the herds grazing or, in closer proximity to him, a child, which, having as yet nothing of the past to shake off, plays in blissful blindness between the hedges of past and future. (61)

> As he who acts is, in Goethe's words, always without a conscience, so is he also always without knowledge; he forgets most things as to do one thing, he is unjust towards what lies behind him... (64)

At different levels, cow/child/artist live in the present, freely, unhindered by memory, intuitively, unreflectively. The unconscious, unreflective life of the body is directly linked to the

art of forgetting. Wyschograd overlooked the fact that for Nietzsche the body is another trope or mask for the art of the genius/creator par excellence. The ban on pity is to be understood in this context. In order to create, "to love his deed infinitely" (64), the creator has to be pitiless, i.e. "narrow-minded, ungrateful to the past, blind to dangers, deaf to warnings, [one is] a little vortex of life in a dead sea of darkness and oblivion" (64). Thus pitilessness towards the historical can be decoded in opposition with the slave's *ressentiment*. From the perspective of this "untimely meditation," the slave, as man of *ressentiment*, is the one who does/can not forget. By this juxtaposition the slave becomes a mask/trope for the excess of history, the sleeplessness, the drive for absolute memory, consciousness as opposed to the body's unconsciousness and to the artist's unreflective creativity. The equations slave-memory/the historical and master-forgetting/the unhistorical offer a key to Nietzsche's main doctrines by forming the bridge between early and later writings. The "common net of thought stretched over the entire globe" of *The Birth of Tragedy* becomes the "great cross-spider of history" in *Untimely Meditations*. Dionysian tragedy is opposed by critical, theoretical Socrates. The art of forgetting, life, intuition is opposed by history, memory, mediate experience, objectivity, abstraction, generalization. In both writings Life is the creativity of presencing in an aura of mystery and illusion. Thus

> All living things require an atmosphere around them, a mysterious misty vapour; if they are deprived of this envelope, if a religion, an art, a genius is condemned to revolve as a star without atmosphere, we should no longer be surprised if they quickly wither and grow hard and unfruitful. (1996:97)

He further qualifies this atmosphere as an "enveloping illusion…a protective and veiling cloud" (97). Illusion, mystery, art, "unconditional faith in right and perfection" (95), "awe", sublimity (83)a " horizon, rounded and closed"(63)—all these

qualifications of the life of the future race of creators circumscribe a metaphysics which is the fruit of his earliest desire to impersonate an artistic Socrates and create a new language. The lost paradise of "health"/childhood/inspiration can be regained (120) only through " a new stern discipline, a new habit, a new instinct, a second nature"(76) which will cultivate the "unhistorical" i.e. will master the art of forgetting. The new language will not be conceptual rather mytho-poetical.

5. Nietzsche as Creator of a New Idiom

It seems that Nietzsche was enacting in his later work the program of his earlier writings. He was obviously qualifying his young loves but the seeds planted in the refuted work, i.e. *The Birth of Tragedy* and *Untimely Meditations* were growing steadily. In his search for origins, Nietzsche witnesses the moment of creation, the origin of meaning. A *creatio ex nihilo* of our hitherto cosmos of meaning in which we have lived and had our being. This cosmos of meaning he identifies as the Platonic-Judeo-Christian. The Logos as Word/concept, i.e. language, fashioned man in its image and likeness. Believer or non-believer, European man was born into the house of meaning of his own making and became its prisoner. He spent centuries inside, in this Procrustean bed, trying to fit in, to adjust, to acquaint himself with all its nooks and crannies, explore again and again the same place with new eyes from a different perspective. At least this seems to correspond to Nietzsche's reading of European meanderings of the history of philosophy: a century-old rumination of the same indigestible food, the Platonic-Judeo-Christian. Philosophically Nietzsche finds fault with the ontotheological foundations of prior metaphysics, i.e. the equation of Being/essence and the Good and the separation of essence and existence. Theologically he laments the reification of myth. The death of God symbolizes the impotence of the Christian symbolic universe to speak meaningfully to modern man, i.e. to awaken him to his infinite, unexplored potentialities. The main

factors in the process of reification were the narrowness of the ontotheological interpretation prevalent in mainline theology and philosophy, on the one hand, the conceptual objectification, on the other. God interpreted as Being itself can never account for the underground rumbling of suffering and evil. All theodicies fail ultimately and essentially to preserve the reality of God as Good and Being and account for evil and non-being. Heidegger notes the necessity to define Being more primordially in order to account for the *nihil*. Also Platonic and Christian thought in spite of all its metamorphoses has deepened the wound between essence/being/god and existence/non-being/man. From Plato through Descartes to Kant Nietzsche watches the infection spreading. He finds most disturbing the infection of moral consciousness. What Nietzsche proposes himself to do is to free man from his own prison by creating a new house of meaning. So he appoints himself as creator of new meaning in whose image and likeness man can live and act. The creation of new myths lacks pity for the old myth which had turned into idols, a hindrance. He philosophizes with a hammer. For Nietzsche it is not the reality of Being itself which is a value as Heidegger naively believes but its mask, the concept of Being itself, an idol, a disincarnated myth, the god of ontotheology. The transvaluation of values means creation of new myths of unsettling, unstable original versatility which would bar conceptual reification, idolatry. It is strange that Heidegger does not realize that the nihilism that Nietzsche ambitions to overcome is not the nothingness as ground or intrinsic to Being itself/as such. Nietzsche's nihilism comes precisely from the ontotheological omission of the nothing in the definition of the Being i.e. the definition of Being as God and the Good which could not account for the richness of existence nor for the depth of suffering. Frozen into concepts it became a tyrannical interpretation of meaning incapable to redeem the continual flux of existence perceived as sinful, thus incapable to awaken consciousness from its dogmatic slumber. The new mythical realm will be circumscribed by the doctrine of the eternal recurrence and the Overman. Instead of *creatio ex nihilo* or *ex deo* the eternal

recurrence of the same, instead of the new man in Christ, the Overman. The new gospel is staged by a masked performance. And it is tragic, tragic in the sense in which early Nietzsche understood Greek tragedy prior to its dissolution in the age of conceptual thinking. n the Greek tragedy of Aeschylus and Sophocles the Apollonian *principium individuorum* appears only to be sacrificed as tragic hero. He is reabsorbed into the nothingness of the ground of all. The sublime is the category most appropriate for the tragic event. It is interesting to note Nietzsche's change of heart regarding Kant in this respect. Whereas Kant along with Schopenhauer and Wagner were viewed as the heralds of a resuscitation of the tragic mode on German soil, later Nietzsche finds him as another instance of critical Socrates, trapped in memory, in self-consciousness, in the net of the of the spider. Nevertheless though with specific qualifications, Nietzsche's sense of the tragic resembles Kant's category of the sublime.

6. The Nietzschean Tragic as a Modified Version of the Kantian Sublime

For Kant the sublime is a relation between the cognitive powers of Imagination and Reason whose specifics are caused by the object and experienced as a paradoxical feeling of displeasure and pleasure. Kant explains that the sublime is not to be found "in products of art where both form and magnitude are determined by human purpose nor in natural things whose very concept carries with it a determinate purpose, but in crude nature" (109). The reason why "crude nature" is the main locus to have the feeling of the sublime is the physically/sensorially overwhelming magnitude and might displayed. Kant has a "sacred thrill", awe, a mixture of horror and respect, i.e., veneration in front of this display. Consider:

> Thus any spectator who beholds massive mountains, climbing skyways, deep gorges with raging streams in

> them, wastelands lying in deep shadow and inviting melancholy meditation...is indeed seized by amazement bordering on terror, by horror and a sacred thrill; but since he knows he is safe, this is not actual fear; it is our attempt to incur it with our imagination in order that we may feel that very power's might and connect the mental agitation this arouses with the mind sense of rest. In this we feel our superiority to nature within ourselves and hence also to nature outside us. (129)

With a few changes this passage could be read as a footnote to Nietzsche's hymn to tragedy or to the Overman. Kant explains that such a spectacular vision challenges the powers of cognition. Imagination and Reason are called into play. But this play is not a harmonious encounter between the two; rather it is a conflict which is resolved at the price of Imagination's self-sacrifice. Imagination as the power of sensibility is crushed under the magnitude and might which evoke Ideas of the Infinite. It cannot produce images of the totality and the absolute which are required by Reason; thence the negative feeling, the displeasure. In experiencing the inadequacy and defeat of Imagination the mind comes to feel its own sublimity which lies is its supersensible vocation (121). Kant concludes:

> We are dealing with nature as appearance. We cannot determine the idea of the supersensible. We cannot cognize but only think nature as an exhibition of it. The idea of the supersensible is aroused and strains the imagination to its limits of expansion and might. The mind has a vocation that wholly transcends the domain of nature: moral feeling. (128)

Thus the feeling of the sublime in its inner mechanics represents a type/figure of the tension and struggle involved in the moral triumph of mind over matter. Morality though can and should never be perfect and the highest good of the reconciliation of nature/happiness and morality/freedom requires an infinite

progression and thus can be assured only in the beyond by postulating god and immortality. It is only in the feeling of the sublime that man comes to a full sense of his vocation, dignity and true self. Kant believes that only by "a strange subreptition we substitute respect for the object for respect for the idea of humanity within ourselves" (114). Consider his exposition of the mathematically and dynamically sublime. Sublime is the absolutely large, large beyond all comparison (103). Excessive might inspires terror, raises the soul's fortitude above its usual middle", allows us to discover in ourselves an ability to resist which is of a different kind, gives us the courage to believe that we could be a match for nature's seeming omnipotence. A "hymn to man's divinity", the sublime call is a calling forth of "affects of the vigorous kind" (133). The enumeration of these is almost unsettling: it is a blueprint of Nietzsche's Dionysian humanity. Enthusiasm, self-imposed *apatheia*, anger, indignant desperation, voluntary isolation (132-4), sublime madness (136), calm, moral control, beligerance (122)—these instances of sublime self-encounter push the self on the brink of physical annihilation and open the entrance into the realm of the supersensible: they are instances of self- conquering, self-expansion and transcendence. Defeated, imagination, the power of imaginal sensibility withdraws. Kant reveals his iconoclastic leanings. This iconoclasm this obsession with a priori purity is echoed in Schopenhauer's appropriation of the ideal of Buddhism and with early Nietzsche's Dionysian discarding of the *principium individuoruum* that only music and pre-Socratic tragedy can induce.

If the Kantian feeling of the sublime is experienced in nature, Nietzsche's tragic feeling is triggered by an artistic performance. Kant rationalizes the sublime/offers a conceptual explanation of the sublime, whereas Nietzsche intends to provoke it as reaction to his exposition of his new doctrines. Most importantly, Nietzsche's tragic does not call to a supersensible vocation. Nor does it need to postulate God and immortality nor is it a "triumph of mind over matter." The annihilation of

Imagination requires the courageous acceptance of the nihil as ground of a conceptually non definable Being. His doctrines are meant to resuscitate in the audience the spirit of the sublime which the Greek tragedy induced. To that purpose Nietzsche's philosophic experiment as a whole the form and idiom of an artistic performance. The play he directs must be a tragedy. It must disturb and awaken consciousness to the call of its own creativity. Tragedy provokes a total participation to the mystery of being. It provokes the vocation for the sublime which in Heideggerian terms would be the vocation to acknowledge the enigma of the presence of the Being as such in its very shelter which conceals it. Since the expression in tragic performance is non-conceptual, its meaning precludes its own doctrinal and dogmatic reification by a perpetual metamorphosis; it is also personal and experiential, and, by its intensity, turns the spectator into an *ad hoc* creator, thus initiating the era of the race of creators, viz. masters of the art of forgetting, of the art of letting the Being as such. Heidegger concludes that Nietzsche has not asked the question of Being as such. Indeed, Nietzsche does not ask the question of the Being as such, rather he provokes the encounter with the tragic mystery in its presencing.

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Political Theology as Theological Politics

1. Introduction

Hanson proposes a post-Cold War paradigm based on the interaction between the contemporary globalization of the political, economic, military, and communication systems and the increasing role of religion in influencing global politics. The four world systems constantly create new environments in which individuals and societies must make rapid choices on the basis of their perceived personal and communal identities. Lilla insists that there is no effacing the intellectual distinction between political theology (which appeals at some point to divine revelation), and a political philosophy that tries to understand and attain the political good without such appeals.

2. Political Theology's Goal of Emancipation

Hanson constructs its new global paradigm by explaining the roles of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Maoist Marxism in world politics: today's global society can escape its increasing economic stratification and global conflict with growing religious awareness, motivation, and public activity.[1] Ebersole remarks that in the controversy over mixing religion and politics, a distinction frequently is not made between religious political action and the joining of church and

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state, and that organized efforts to sway government in the name of religion have been part of the political process. Ebersole claims that a number of religious groups have formed agencies which have the assigned function of providing their constituents with information about government (the attempts of religious groups to influence government are usually based on utilitarian and broadly ethical considerations).[2]

Bell points out that the state and civil society are embraced as the principal agents of social and political change (the church's political presence is that of a guardian of abstract values).[3] de Gruchy holds that the church is a significant institution within civil society. A democracy requires that all faith communities should be respected and treated fairly by those in authority. Religious communities should have the necessary freedom to worship and live out their faith in daily life. The freedom of the church is one that is derived from faithfulness to the witness of the church. The touchstone of a truly democratic society is the way in which it cares for the disadvantaged. A democratic world order means developing a genuinely global democratic order through which matters of global concern can be addressed. Democracy requires the commitment and participation of all citizens if it is to work properly.[4] Hewitt maintains that theology is mediated through human action and experience, generating its own forms of social organization and power hierarchies (it is thus political). Neither critical theory nor political theology advocates a particular form of politics or social organization. Political theology's goal of emancipation is directed toward alleviating the unnecessary misery of the oppressed. Theology is embedded in a specific religious tradition that has its own language and symbol system.[5] According to Sedgwick, the future of non-Western Christianity will be a struggle against poverty and violence, and it will also be about the mission of local Christian groups ("churches") in predominantly urban areas. There are new challenges to the accepted place of the existing churches and faith communities within society and to existing cultures, social traditions, and values.[6]

3. Political State and Religious Order

Lilla posits that political theology is discourse about political authority based on a revealed divine nexus. Our heritage demands self-awareness.

> There is no effacing the intellectual distinction between political theology, which appeals at some point o divine revelation, and a political philosophy that tries to understand and attain the political good without such appeals. And there are, psychologically speaking, real dangers in trying to forge a third way between them.[7]

As Robbins puts it, the modern history of secularization has taught us that we are never entirely rid of religion, and that the return of religion, whether for good or evil, "remains a potent vehicle of political mobilization and, correlatively, a potential source of continued violence and aggression."[8] Robbins contends that there is no radical political theology: we have either a radical theology that effectively deconstructs the theological tradition while maintaining ambivalent or essentially conservative in its basic political philosophy, "or a radical political theory of liberation that remains essentially conservative in its basic theological commitments."[9] Milbank states that it is dangerous to our liberty to ignore the fact that most global terrorists are part of political Islam and that other manifestations of this also threaten the West: the majority Islamic religious view that political law and the political state are full aspects of a religious order is not compatible with Christian religious views.

> There can be no dialogue about this. To the contrary, this constitutive aspect of Islam does in fact need to be defeated – as peacefully as possible. […] Suddenly the idea that we do indeed have to defend 'Christendom' seems not entirely ridiculous to all those in the West who think clearly and rigorously.[10]

Philpott notes that the greatest assault on the United States since since its very founding "had little plausible origin in the dynamics of alliances and polarity, in the rise and fall of great powers, in any state's quest for security, or even in the actions of any state at all."[11] Philpott adds that it eludes the emphases of realism: those involved in crashing planes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, were organized around a kind of idea, "and appraised the international system according to a kind of notion to which international relations scholars have paid relatively little attention: religion."[12] Rorty argues that both law and custom should leave a believer free to say in the public square that his endorsement of redistributionist social legislation "is a result of his belief that God, in such passages as Psalm 72, has commanded that the cause of the poor should be defended."[13] Rorty believes that religious people should trim their utterances to suit his utilitarian views, and that in citing Leviticus they are finding a vent for their own sadistic impulses. "But I do not know how to make either of these propositions plausible to them."[14]

On Welsch's reading, modernist thinking maintains that all our understanding is determined by our physical, cultural, social, etc., parameters and contains nothing capable of reaching beyond them: a determination and limitation of this kind could be stated only from the perspective of a God's-eye view. "Otherwise the assertion would be itself subject to the same restrictions and thus could itself be at best only relatively valid and hence unable to serve as a binding principle. But according to the modernist position, precisely such an overview is unavailable to us."[15] Vattimo stresses that one should say that things are what they truly are, only within the realms of interpretation and language: a consistent formulation of hermeneutics requires a profound ontological revolution, "because ontology must bid farewell to the idea of an objectified, external Being to which thought should strive to adequate itself."[16] As Gray puts it, the world in which we find ourselves is littered with the debris of utopian projects, "which though they were framed in secular terms that denied the truth of religion were in fact vehicles for religious myths."[17]

4. On Liberal Theology

Lilla notices that the Enlightenment began by observing human nature in all its variety ("religion has the power to forge social bonds that no other force seems to possess"[18]), and that if Rousseau is right religion is too entwined with our moral experience ever to be disentangled from the things touching on morality.

> We in the West have chosen to limit our politics to protecting individuals from the worst harms they can inflict on one another, to securing fundamental liberties and providing for their basic welfare, while leaving their spiritual destinies in their own hands.[19]

Lilla explains that liberal theology was a political theology ("an implicit one, a weak one, a complacent one"): the liberal theologians divinized human religious yearnings as institutions of a God who works through history, "and then divinized history as the sacred theater where human morality is developed and realized."[20] Lilla posits that there are real dangers in trying to forge a third way between them: the theological sanctification of a single form of political life, and the spiritual despair in the face of political failure.[21]

5. Conclusions

Ebersole reasons that religious groups participate in the democratic process of discussion, pressure, and consent by which government policy is formed. Bell writes that every theology embodies a vision of how human communities ought to be organized: the dominant tradition of contemporary political theology embraces the standard reading of the state and civil society (the fundamental task of political theology becomes the propagation of the values and ideals deemed necessary to sustain and perfect the freedom that appeared with the advent of modernity).

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Participants show interest in Symposium’s presentations.

His Grace Ioan Casian of Vicina and Professors Richard Grallo and Daniel Damian

Metropolitan College of New York students